

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4655

S E C R E T JIDDA 3477

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA

SUBJ: ANOTHER SECURITY COUNCIL VETO?

REF: JIDDA 3444

1. EARLY MORNING RADIO REPORTS HEARD HERE ALLUDE TO TALK IN UN CORRIDORS OF POSSIBILITY ANOTHER US VETO IN UNSC WITH REGARD CURRENT ARAB-ISRAEL CONFRONTATION OVER ISRAEL'S SKYJACKING OF MEA-IRAQI AIRLINER. WE ARE CERTAIN EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK TO AVOID SUCH HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE EVENTUALITY, AND PERHAPS PROBLEM HAS ALREADY BEEN RESOLVED. IF NOT, THEN IN WORKING OUT USG POSSITION, SUGGEST PARTICULAR ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO IMPACT OF VETO HERE.

2. WE CANNOT POSTULATE FOR DEPT NEAT POLITICAL EQUATION IN WHICH US VETO WILL INEVITABLY LEAD TO IMMEDIATE SHARP ACTION BY SAG DAMAGING TO OUR INTERESTS. WE CAN SAY, HOWEVER, THAT VETO WILL HAVE SAME BAD REACTION AS ELSEWHERE IN ARAB WORLD AND IN ADDITION COULD ADD SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE NEGATIVE CAST OF MIND OF THOSE WITH WHOM WE NOW MUST DO A PERSUASIVE JOB OF REASONING WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE SAUDI LIMITATIONS ON RATE OF INCREASE IN OIL PRODUCTION (AS PROJECTED IN REFTTEL).

3. RECOGNIZE ALSO THAT U.S. HAS EVOLVED CAREFUL, RATIONAL POSITION ON ARAB-ISRAEL TERRORISM AND ON NEED FOR

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BEING EVEN-HANDED IN CONDEMNING BOTH THE QUARTERS FROM

WHICH IT EMANATES. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, USG HAS ENDEAVORED ALSO FOLLOW BALANCED AND SENSIBLE POLICY AIMED AT PREVENTING EXCESSIVE AND OVERLY SEVERE CONDEMNATIONS OF ISRAEL, I.E. SANCTIONS, IN UNSC.

4. HOWEVER, PROBLEM MAY BE TURNING INTO ONE OF WHAT PRICE COMMON SENSE, CONSISTENCY AND MODERATION? HOW MUCH CAN WE AFFORD TO PAY WHEN WE ARE DEALING WITH EMOTIONAL, IRRATIONAL INCREASINGLY INCENSED ARABS? PROBABLY WE CAN AFFORD TO IGNORE SADAT'S EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OR PERHAPS EVEN QADHAFI'S, BUT SHOULD WE NOT GIVE SOME VERY EXTRA WEIGHT AT THIS TIME TO GROWING SIGNS OF SAUDI DISCONTENT?

5. AGAIN, WE WOULD NOT ENDEAVOR ESTABLISH PRECISELY POINT AT WHICH SAUDIS WILL BE STRONGLY IMPELLED TO ALLOW POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS TO MOTIVATE THEIR OIL POLICY (AND AT MOMENT CERTAINLY ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS SEEM MORE CONTROLLOING). BUT PERHAPS WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THEY PROBABLY DO HAVE OPTION OF PLACING LIMITATIONS ON INCREASES IN OIL PRODUCTION, ON THE ONE HAND PROVIDING US WITH EXPLANATIONS BASED ON PLAUSIBLE ECONOMIC REASONS, WHILE ON THE OTHER AIMING GARNER SOME POLITICAL CREDIT WITH THEIR ARAB FRIENDS--AND THEREBY RELIEVE SOME OF POLITICAL PRESSURE THEY CLAIM TO BE UNDER FROM ARAB GOVTS. AND OPINION.
THACHER

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NNN

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